

For immediate release

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*Washington, DC* – Today Congressman Sires meet with Olympic gold medalist, Cullen Jones, and the USA Swimming Foundation to discuss the need to provide swimming lessons, especially for minority children. Swimmer Cullen Jones made history last summer when he helped his teammates win an Olympic gold medal in the 4x100 freestyle relay.

“It is unacceptable that each day an average of ten people die from drowning accidents in our country, and it is shameful that drowning rates among minority children are 2 to 3 times higher than the rates of nonminority children,” said Congressman Sires. The USA Swimming Foundation, the fundraising branch of USA Swimming, has developed the “Make A Splash” campaign to help provide swimming education opportunities for children that do not currently have access to the life-saving instruction. “I am thrilled that Cullen Jones has dedicated his time to promoting this important campaign. Where I grew up, swimming lessons were not something everyone did. Pools were scarce, and swimming was not an easily accessible sport. We must ensure that each child has the opportunity to learn how to swim in order to prevent more needless deaths,” added Congressman Sires.

Congressman Sires was joined by Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, a devoted advocate for drowning prevention, at the meeting. On January 13, 2009 the two members introduced H.Res. 57 a resolution expressing the importance of swimming education for children in our country. The resolution also celebrates the work of initiatives that currently provide swimming lessons to underprivileged communities as well as other efforts that help educate parents and caregivers about drowning prevention.

